

FRENCH IRRELIGION AND IMPIETY
ALARMING TO CHRISTIANS.

AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

This little Tract being intended for the information of people at large, on what is deemed an interesting subject, the Writer has studiously avoided all discussions of controverted topics, as well as elaborate reasonings. Anxious to state facts plainly, and to promote the welfare of his fellow men, by means which he has judged conducive to that end, he hopes the simplicity of the dress in which he appears, will meet with indulgence from those of nicer discernment.

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FRENCH IRRELIGION AND IMPIETY

ALARMING, &c.

Countrymen, Friends, and Christians,

THE most astonishing events have lately taken place in the kingdom of France. Every thing held sacred among men has been trampled upon and ridiculed; and our holy religion in particular has been treated in a manner that must fill serious minds with indignation and horror. The effect of such impious proceedings, if not speedily guarded against, must be felt by people of every nation. The contagion of infidelity is too easily spread, and, in its consequences, proves destructive to all the best interests of mankind.

Now is the time for you to lay these things

to heart. Let me request your attention while I endeavour to set your danger before you. It is not my design to say any thing about matters of civil policy; far less to pretend to exhibit a model of a perfect Government. In vain do imperfect men expect such a state of things, and to hold it up as an object of pursuit might be dangerous, at a time when their minds are disturbed and agitated by the most furious passions.

It is probable that many of you have not the means of being well informed concerning the transactions to which I refer; that the accounts you receive are partial; and that some have unhappily adopted schemes, which give them an interest in endeavouring to mislead and deceive you. I shall therefore begin with a short Narrative of facts taken from the Journals of the National Convention and other authentic documents, that from these you may judge for yourselves whether the conclusions deduced from them be well founded; and whether it be true that the French Nation has renounced the Religion of Jesus Christ. This detail must be often painful, and it will sometimes be necessary to a-



bridge the accounts with which we are furnished. I have, however, no object in view but to state matters as they have really happened, nor shall I assert any thing but what I firmly believe to be true.

In Dec. 1792, M. Dupont, a Member of the National Convention, expressed himself in this manner, ‘ What! Thrones are overturned! Sceptres broken! Kings expire! and yet the Altars of God remain! a single breath of enlightened Reason will be sufficient to make them disappear——can it be doubted but that the French people, now Sovereign, will be wise enough to overthrow *those Altars* and *those Idols*, to which Kings have hitherto made them subject? *Nature* and *Reason*, these ought to be the gods of men! these are my gods! admire Nature, cultivate Reason. Legislators, if you desire that the French People should be happy, propagate these principles. The tyranny of Priests extends their dominion to another life, of which they have no other idea than that of eternal punishment; a doctrine which some men have hitherto had the good nature to believe. But these prejudices

‘ must now fall; we must destroy them, or
 ‘ they will destroy us. For myself, I honest-
 ‘ ly avow to the Convention I AM AN
 ‘ ATHEIST.’ When these words were ut-
 ‘ tered, there were some murmurings, but a
 ‘ great number of Members cried out: ‘ What
 ‘ is that to us, you are an honest man.’

On the 14th. Sept. 1793, one of the Sec-
 tions of Paris passed a Decree, relative to those
 who had fallen in the shocking massacre of the
 10th. of August, 1792, of which the follow-
 ing is an abstract, ‘ Let us speak *the Language*
 ‘ *of Reason.* The Martyrs of Liberty have
 ‘ no need of being recommended to a just,
 ‘ good, and merciful God; the blood which
 ‘ they have shed effaces all their faults, and
 ‘ gives them a claim to the favour of the De-
 ‘ ity. Shall we offer up prayers that he may
 ‘ not condemn our brethren to eternal fire?
 ‘ This would be to insult him; it would be
 ‘ telling him that he is the most ferocious,
 ‘ the most absurd, the most ridiculous of all
 ‘ Beings. Substitute Songs of Liberty for
 ‘ the absurd Hymns ascribed to the ferocious
 ‘ David—that crowned Monster—that Nero
 ‘ of the Hebrews,’ &c.

On the 20th. of Sept. last, the Convention, after hearing the Report of the Committee of Public Instruction respecting a new Division of the Year, decreed as follows, ‘ That
 ‘ the Era of the French shall be reckoned
 ‘ from the foundation of the Republic, which
 ‘ took place 22d. Sept. 1792; that the Christian or Vulgar Era is abolished; that the
 ‘ year is divided into 12 months, each of
 ‘ 30 days, after which five days shall ensue,
 ‘ which shall make part of no month whatever. Each month shall be divided into
 ‘ three parts, of ten days each. The months
 ‘ shall bear the names of the Liberty and Equality of the People, of the Regeneration
 ‘ of the Mountain, of the Republic, of the Tennis Court, of Unity, of Fraternity,
 ‘ of the Pikes, of the Sans Culottes,’ &c.
 ‘ &c. The days shall bear the names,
 ‘ of the Level of Liberty, of the National
 ‘ Cockade, of the Plough, of the Compass, of
 ‘ the Fasces, of Cannon, of Oak, of Rest,’
 &c. &c. *

* The Report on which this Decree proceeded, is said to have been made up by the first French Astronomers, and was received by the Convention with bursts of applause.

In consequence of the above decree, a complaint * was soon brought before the Municipality of Paris, that certain Merchants refused to open their shops on the days heretofore called Sundays; upon which the Council of the Municipality *ordered* the Merchants 'to keep their shops open, under the pain 'of being considered as suspected persons."

On the very next day, a Letter was received by the Convention from the Procureur Syndic of Tonnere, bearing, that 'several Communes of that district had resolved hereafter, to have neither masses, nor *any other prayers*, and that they had *abolished Sundays*.' And very soon after † he informs the Convention that he had issued an order, 'forbidding 'the future celebration of religious services on 'Sundays, *commanding* that these should be 'celebrated on the last day of each decade; 'and he requests that this order should be 'communicated to the other districts:' his request was not complied with, as being contrary to one of the Articles of the New Constitution, but what he had done in his district was spoken of with approbation.

* October 20.

† October 24.

‘ To destroy Fanaticism,’ says Andrew Dumont,* one of the Representatives of the People, who had the charge of a district, ‘ I order all Priests who celebrate festivals on Sundays to be arrested; I proscribe those black Animals called Priests.’

At a meeting of the Municipality of Paris,† Chaumet, one of their leaders, expressed himself thus, ‘ I require that the People of Paris declare, that they *acknowledge no other worship than that of Truth and Reason.*’ In consequence of this motion, the Commons decreed, ‘ that all the Churches or Temples, of *whatever* Religion or Worship, existing in Paris, should be instantly shut: that every individual who shall seek for the opening of a Church or Temple, shall be arrested as a suspicious person.’

‘ A letter was then read, amid the applause of the galleries, informing the Municipality, that at Nancy, *every kind of religious worship* was abolished; that every object which could recal religion to the imagina-

* October 24.

† November 26.

‘ tion, was destroyed; and that *all the Churches*
‘ were shut.’

In the prosecution of the same impious scheme, all religious instruction is excluded from the system of Education prescribed for the youth of France. Manuel, who lately suffered under the Guillotine, but who last year made a distinguished figure in the Legislative Body, proposed a plan of Education, in direct contempt of Christianity; and though it was not then adopted, one very similar has been decreed by the Convention*. They ‘ have established schools in all parts of the ‘ Republic, for the purposes of teaching the ‘ youth—the French Language—the Natural ‘ Rights and Duties of Man—the use of Figures, Weights and Measures—for instructing them in Swimming, Running, Wrestling, and other Exercises which give agility ‘ to the body, and for infusing into their ‘ minds sentiments of Republicanism, and a ‘ love of Liberty and Equality;’ but it is expressly declared, that an Instructor of Youth shall be disqualified from performing ‘ the

* October 24.

Service of any Worship, in whatever manner it may be understood."

On the 23d. of October, a Citizen of the Popular Society of Moulins, being admitted to the bar of the National Convention, addressed them thus, ' I announce to you
' the triumph of Reason over Fanaticism,
' throughout the whole Department of Allier.
' The Bishop of Moulins officiates with a
' a pike and red cap, instead of a cross and
' mitre. The dying are comforted and not
' frightened. Over the gate of the Burying
' Ground is the following inscription, *Death*
' *is only Eternal Sleep!*'

About the same time, a Priest of the name of Laurens J. A. Dunand, Deputy from the Department of Mayenne, appeared in a meeting of the Municipality of Paris, and deposited on the Altars of Philosophy and Equality his office of a Priest, saying,
' He was persuaded that the God of Nature
' and Liberty communicates with his Creatures without an Intermediary.' He then renounced the name given him at his Baptism, which, he added, ' made him either a

‘ fool or a knave.’ The Council applauded his principles, ordered that his Letter of Priesthood should be burned (which was done immediately) and that the Letters of Dunand, containing his Religious Principles, should be printed and posted up in the streets.

The two Representatives of the People at Rochefort wrote to the Convention, that
 ‘ *Eight Constitutional Priests and a Protestant*
 ‘ *Minister* had *abjured* their Errors in the
 ‘ Temple of Truth, formerly the Parish
 ‘ Church, and had promised to teach nothing
 ‘ but morality, and the hatred of all Reli-
 ‘ gious Tyranny. They confirmed their
 ‘ Oath by burning their Letters of Ordina-
 ‘ tion amid the mixed acclamations both of
 ‘ Catholics and Protestants.’

On the 7th. of Nov. ‘ There appeared at
 ‘ the Bar of the Convention, Gobet the
 ‘ Archbishop of Paris, attended by his Vicar
 ‘ eight Rectors and *a Protestant Minister* of
 ‘ the name of Julien,’* when ‘ they *abjured*,’

* This *second Julian*, having lost the favour of the Convention, of which he is a Member, has absconded, and diligent search is making to apprehend him. The Guillotine is likely

not only 'their sacred functions,' but horrible to relate! 'the Religion of Jesus Christ.' We are told that the 'Convention rejoiced in 'the triumph of Reason and Nature, saluted 'the Infidels with loud applauses, and the 'President gave them the Civic Kifs.' And a Member then proposed, that a Colossal Monument should be immediately raised in the great Hall of the Commonalty of Paris, to manifest the SUPPRESSION OF ALL RELIGIOUS WORSHIP; to bear on its front the word *Light*, on its breast *Nature* and *Truth*, and on its arms *Strength* and *Courage*. The design was applauded and immediately decreed.

Morron, the Presbyterian Pastor of St. Thomas de Louvre in Paris, on the 15th. of November, *deposited* on the Table of the Commons *four Silver Cups* which had been used in *administering the Lord's Supper*, adding these words, 'they served our Worship, 'but prejudice, and sometimes reason, reproached us with the extreme folly of using 'them.'

to be his fate. Dupont, the *Atheist*, has lately suffered by that instrument of destruction; 'though hand join in hand, the 'wicked shall not go unpunished.'

Soon after, a number of Priests gave in their Letters of Priesthood to the Municipality of Paris, saying, 'they would no longer be the Vehicles of Falsehood; they would no longer transmit Fables to the People, and maintain them in their Errors.' And a whole Section of the People came in a body to announce, that 'they acknowledged no other Worship than that of Liberty, and that in future they would have no other light to direct them, than that of Reason.'" The Council applauded the triumph of Philosophy, and declared that all religious worship was then abolished, except that of MODERN PHILOSOPHY; and resolved to erect public Tribunes, in imitation of the Rostra in the Roman Forum, in which Republican principles should be preached.

Anacharsis Clootes, a foreigner, not long ago naturalized in France, and thereupon returned a Member of the Convention, presented to that Assembly, on the 17th. of November last, his Work *in favour of* MAHOMETANISM. 'It belongs to you,' said he, 'to repair an insult offered to Philosophy, by the Legislative Assembly, who, upon

‘ the suggestion of the Bishop of Calvados,
 ‘ now guillotined, adjourned the reception
 ‘ of one of my philosophical productions.
 ‘ It is now acknowledged that the *Adversa-*
 ‘ *ries of Religion have deserved well of man-*
 ‘ *kind.* On this ground, I demand that a
 ‘ statue may be erected in the Temple of
 ‘ Reason, to the first man *who abjured it.*
 ‘ His name is Jean Millier, a Curé in Cham-
 ‘ paigne, whose philosophical testament car-
 ‘ ried desolation to all the Christian factions.
 ‘ The memory of this honest man, blasted
 ‘ under the ancient Government, ought to
 ‘ be established under the regimen of Na-
 ‘ ture.”

Danton, another Member of the Conven-
 tion, of distinguished name, expressed him-
 self in these terms—“ Every Mediator be-
 ‘ tween Man and the Divinity is perfect
 ‘ quackery. All revealed Religion is a hu-
 ‘ man invention; in its principle it is im-
 ‘ posture, and in its effects a series of Su-
 ‘ perstition. Its Morality is in many points
 ‘ opposite to the imprescriptible law of Na-
 ‘ ture, and the good order of Society; in
 ‘ others it is impossible to be practised; what-

‘ ever is praise-worthy in it, belongs to Natural Religion. There is no occasion for any other Morality, than that which Nature inspires.’

About this time*, the Curé of Aurillac, President of the Popular Society of that town, in presence of the National Convention, ‘ *abjured* his Priestly Office, and *Religion*.’

A Deputation also of Citizens from the Department of Cantal, was introduced to the Convention, who, after relating instances of their zeal for the Republic, concluded thus, ‘ One thing is wanting to the Revolution; our Department has been eager to give an example of Philosophy. We have suppressed Priests and their Worship. The Eternal will have among us no other temples than our hearts, and no other worship than acts of civism.’

On the same day, the Republicans of the Section of Unity, entered the Hall of the Convention, with martial music, and one of them, in the name of the rest, spoke as fol-

* Nov. 20.

lows, 'It is not surprising that Reason should
 ' triumph over error, and that the People
 ' should gain a victory over Priestcraft; but
 ' it is astonishing, that for *eighteen centuries*,
 ' *men should have considered as divine, a Re-*
 ' *ligion celebrated* only by the evils it has oc-
 ' casioned to mankind, and by the crimes it
 ' has caused to be committed.' The orator
 then recounted the principal epochs of Chris-
 tianity, at which massacres and assassinations
 have been committed, and 'declared that the
 ' Section of Unity would, in future, acknow-
 ' ledge no other worship than that of Rea-
 ' son. We swear,' said he (all his attend-
 ants stretching out their arms towards the
 President) 'to acknowledge no other Worship
 ' than that of Reason, no other Deity than Li-
 ' berty, and no other Priests than our Magi-
 ' strates.' 'Yes!' cried voices from every part of
 the Hall, 'We take the same Oath.' The scene
 concluded with the loud applause of the As-
 sembly. Immediately after this, the Direct-
 ory of the Department of *Haute Marne*, in-
 formed the Convention, that they paid
 attention to the Ashes of the Dead, and had
 ordered a Stone to be erected at the entrance
 of every Burying Ground, with this inscrip-

tion, ‘ *Here is the abode of Peace and Eternal Sleep.*’

On the 30th. of Nov. the Pupils of the new Republican School of the Section *Des Acris*, appeared at the Bar of the Convention, and one of them made a long speech, which was crowned with applause. He set forth, that ‘ all Religious Worship had been suppressed in their Section ; even the very idea of Religion.’ He added, that ‘ he and his school-fellows, *detested God* ; that they fraternized with Jews, Mahometans, Protestants and persons of every Sect ; that, instead of learning the Scriptures, they learned the Declaration of Rights, and made the Constitution their Catechism.’ ‘ The President having expressed to this deputation, the satisfaction of the Convention, they were admitted to the honours of the Sitting, and received *the Kiss of Fraternity* amidst the loudest applause.’

I shall subjoin only a very few facts more.

In the wretched City of Lyons not only is Public Worship suppressed and the Churches

defiled, but the most gross outrage has been committed on every thing sacred. On the 10th. of Nov. last, an Afs dressed out in a Sacerdotal Habit, was led in procession through the town by two Sans Culottes, carrying a Sacred Cup, out of which they gave the animal drink; and, when they arrived at one of the public edifices, *Bibles, Books of Devotion, &c. &c.* were piled up in a heap, which was set on fire amidst horrid shouts from a vast concourse of people, ‘ Long live ‘ the Sans Culottes.’

The National Convention has, in imitation of the Ancient Heathens, consecrated a Pantheon for the reception of the busts of those men whom they profess to revere. And who are the persons whom they have ranked among the number of their Divinities? Voltaire and Rousseau, the most distinguished enemies of Christianity in modern times; Brutus, a resolute Heathen, who, under the pretence of patriotism, imbrued his hands in the blood of his own son; Pelletier and Marat, whose violence and crimes provoked the daggers of Assassins to their destruction. The latter of these the Club of the Cordeliers, in their im-

pious frenzy, have gloried in, as worthy of being preferred to the Saviour of Mankind.* Thst they might show their respect for Paganism still more, the Convention has dedicated Festival Days to Imaginary Beings, such as Virtue, Genius, Labour and Opinion; and, to finish the group, have added one more, clothed in flesh and blood, to their numerous list of Deities. On the 10th. of Nov. last, a Young Woman, of a fine figure, arrayed in the Robes of Liberty, was introduced into the National Convention as a Goddess, to whom they paid their homage; on which occasion, an Hymn to Human Reason was sung, and the Music played a Hymn to Liberty, and the People cried out, with one voice, ‘ *No more Altars, no more Priests, no other God but the God of Nature.*’

* Club of the Cordeliers at Paris, 27th. July, 1793, ‘ The Sitting was devoted to the Regulation of the Ceremonies to be observed on bringing *the Heart of Marat* into the Hall of the Club.’ Having described the order of Procession, a Speech was read, having this Motto,

‘ *O Heart of Jesus! O Heart of Marat!*’

A comparison is drawn in this Oration between these two Personages. The criminal exploits of this pretended Friend of the People, are put in competition with the Divine Doctrines of the Son of God—Christ is said to be a Prophet—Marat to be a God. The Concubine of Marat, on account of her care of him, is celebrated for having saved the God of the Republic from the dagger of Fayette, by which he must otherwise have fallen. What blasphemy in all this!

In laying before you this painful narrative, I have avoided, as much as possible, the mixing it with any remarks of my own, that you may read in their very words, and judge for yourselves to what dreadful lengths in irreligion and impiety that infatuated people have gone. Consider coolly and seriously what I have shortly stated, and then say whether their conduct ought not to be held in abhorrence by every one that believes in the Gospel of the Son of God. Observe, I entreat you, that it is not the absurdities of Popery alone, which they have rejected. All Religion and all Worship of the true God is disclaimed by them. The Doctrines of a Future Judgment and an Eternal Life, are derided as irrational and absurd, and the whole System of Christianity is treated as if it were an Imposition on the credulity of Mankind. That day in particular, which is consecrated to the religious Commemoration of our Blessed Saviour's Resurrection, is expressly abolished,* and people are required to keep their

* By changing the week into ten days in place of seven, the observation of the Christian Sabbath must become, in process of time, altogether impracticable. Suppose that on Wednesday the first of January, 1794, we were to lengthen our weeks to ten days, giving new names to all the days of the week, I imagine there are but few people who would be able

shops open and to follow their secular employments on it, under pain of being held up as enemies to the Republic.

Whatever pretences may be used to justify this conduct, and however much they may attempt to cover over their real purpose, under the shelter of Universal Toleration*, nothing can be more obvious, than that it is their determined resolution, by this means, to

to tell, before seven years had elapsed, which day was in reality the Sabbath of Christians; What then must be the case in the space of 100 or 200 years?

* Since the preceding narrative of facts was sent to the press, the Journals of the Convention of the 6th. of December have come to hand, from which it appears, that the measures taken to suppress Religious Worship, which seem to have been carried on with great violence, had produced an alarm among some classes of people. To preserve peace, the Convention have passed a decree, 'forbidding all violence or menaces against the freedom of Religious Worship, and promising protection to people of all denominations.' They renew, however, their former decrees against Priests, and declare that 'they do not mean to check the aspiring flight of the public mind.' In like manner, the Municipality of Paris have resolved not to listen to petitions against any form of Worship, but they add, that they "shall always cause the will of such Sections to be respected, which have renounced all Religious Worship, except that of Reason, Liberty, and the Republican Virtues." This is additional evidence, that the Rulers of France have espoused the cause of Irreligion, and that their retainers, taking advantage of the confusions and anarchy which prevail, have been exercising gross violence to crush all Religious Worship, till the danger arising from such oppression, has induced these public bodies to make declarations of the above tenor, in favour of toleration. It appears that they have at length been obliged even to allow the Churches to be opened for Religious Service.

destroy the credibility of the Christian Religion, and, if possible, to bury in everlasting oblivion, the sacred name of its Author. Why have they abolished the Christian Era? What other reason can be assigned for this measure, but that they may break all associations of every kind, which sentiments of veneration and gratitude have formed in men's minds, with that great and interesting period. Why have they abolished the Lord's day? Is it not in order to obliterate, as far as lies in their power, the memory of that glorious Event on which our Faith and Hope do rest? They knew well that the observance of the Christian Sabbath, the weekly return of devout Exercises and religious Instruction, are the great means of preserving, in the minds of men, a sense of God, and our obligations to him. The places of Public Worship are defiled with impious Rites of their own invention, for no other reason but to prevent those social communications of devout and grateful sentiments, which circulate from heart to heart in a worshipping Assembly of Christians. And to put the matter beyond all doubt, they have expressed themselves, concerning our holy Faith, and, its divine

Author, in terms of contempt and hatred that exceed all bounds of decency, and betray unequivocal marks of inveterate malice and hostile design against the Religion of Jesus.

But perhaps it will be said, that the things which have been related are so shocking that it is almost impossible to believe them, and persons interested in misleading you, will endeavour to persuade you that they are not true. My answer is, that they are published in their daily Journals; they have never once been publicly contradicted; and they are supported by the very same evidence with many other facts which you never pretend to call in question. You believe, I presume, that the old Government of France is overturned; that the King and Queen have been put to death; that Brissot and twenty other Members of the Convention were guillotined in one day; you believe that the ruling party has prevailed over those who professed to support the religious establishment; and, perhaps, some of you have been disposed to believe, with seeming satisfaction, their victories in other respects. If you are convinced

of these things, and will not believe the facts and events which I have detailed, and for which you have at least equal authority, there is nothing farther I can do for your benefit, but to pray to God that you may not suffer by your incredulity and security.

I shall next be told, perhaps, that these impious opinions are not entertained by the people at large; that they are the sentiments of a number of individuals only, who have pushed themselves forward into public view, but that there are many sincere Christians among them; and some will be ready to subjoin, that the number of those among ourselves who undervalue religion and its institutions, is by no means inconsiderable. Let us candidly inquire into the grounds of these allegations.

With regard to France, I am happy to express my hopes, that, in the midst of much superstition, there may be in it many individuals who have a high veneration for our Divine Religion, whose minds are grievously afflicted with the infidelity and violence which prevail among them, and who are devoutly

praying for the restoration of the Sabbath and the ordinances of the Gospel.

Still, however, we have sufficient grounds for asserting, that the people of France, as a nation, have thrown off all Religion, and have treated Christianity, in particular, as if it were an imposture. From what has been said it is manifest, that the Representative Body of the people, have avowed their infidelity, 'setting their mouths against the Heavens.' Ps. lxxiii. 9.

Let it be considered then that the Members of the Convention are indeed a full Representation of the very lowest of the people. In France *Universal Suffrage* (which some among ourselves seem to hold out as the foundation of political happiness) has been established. The present Rulers were chosen by the voice of the populace, at a time when their minds were too much heated by zeal for what they deemed the cause of their country, to suffer themselves to be influenced in their choice by motives which may operate upon men in cooler times.

What then shall we think of the faith of the Constituents when their popular Representatives have boldly declared their purpose to subvert the Gospel of Jesus Christ? This irreligious spirit began early to work in the Convention, as if they had imbibed it among those who elected them, and as if they had been chosen to diffuse it; it spread with amazing rapidity, receiving, on every occasion, the countenance and applause of the people, as being congenial to their own sentiments, and now it triumphs over all opposition.

The Revolution in France had no sooner taken place, than the National Assembly met and transacted business on Sunday in the same manner as on the other days of the week; and, from that time downward to the present day, this practice has been uniformly persisted in. Amidst the various reverses of fortune they have experienced, they have never once acknowledged their dependence on the Providence of God. Neither their unexpected successes, nor their direful calamities, have led them at any one time to the Religious Duty of humiliation or of thanksgiving.

It was not, however, till last year that a direct attack was made on Revealed Religion. Then war was proclaimed against the Christian Faith. In this unhallowed contest, parties the most opposite, struggled for fame. The Feuillans and Jacobins, the Girondists and Maratists, bore down the few Believers who might belong to the Convention; and now the Worship of Nature and Reason is the only Religion professed among them. What ideas they affix to such expressions I know not. To me it appears that they have embraced either *downright Atheism*, or something very similar to it.

Nor ought we to forget that the most celebrated Clubs in Paris, and the Municipal Bodies in various parts of the kingdom, have vied for distinction in this irreligious warfare with the Convention itself; while many individuals have gained a name in the inglorious work.

The situation of Britain, blessed be God, is so very different, that no just comparison can be made between it and that of France. Outward respect is shown by every body of

men for Divine Institutions, and many individuals, in the highest ranks of life, regularly attend in places of Public Worship, thus giving an example to their inferiors worthy of imitation.

Our gracious Sovereign, we mention it with pleasure, fails not to call upon his subjects, to join in the devout exercises of fasting or of thanksgiving, according as the aspects of Providence towards this nation are favourable or threatening; and, in the habitual tenour of his own life, he sets before his people a noble pattern of piety and virtue. In the great Council of the Nation, Religion is treated with reverence; the Sunday is set apart for sacred duties, and on it the ordinary business of life is suspended. In this country, the great body of the people, it is believed, continue to resort on the Sabbath to the places set apart for Prayer and Praise, and for the conveyance of Religious and Moral Instruction. Allow me to subjoin, that whatever defects there may be in the British Constitution (for nothing merely human is perfect) we have reason to rejoice that it recognises the truth of our Holy Religion, and

gives countenance to those who are employed in promoting its interests among the people.

Think seriously then on the consequences of French Irreligion, and consider how nearly they concern Christians of every denomination. If these things had happened in the most remote parts of the earth, must not devout souls have been greatly distressed to hear of such impious Doctrines? Must they not have been afflicted in spirit, on account of the most formidable attack made on Christianity since its first publication? But these events have taken place in our neighbourhood; among a people, whom indeed we long considered as our enemies, but whom, not a few, have of late pretended to admire. Is it because they have renounced the Faith of the Gospel, that you behold them with such complacency? Would you admire, or keep company with, or wish success to, a friend or neighbour, who should openly trample upon every thing you have been accustomed to hold sacred and venerable? And, can you seriously think of such multitudes of men, in the most public manner boasting of their in-

fidelity, without feeling sentiments of indignation and abhorrence?

But this is not all; there is infinite danger to be apprehended from the spreading of these impious tenets. There is reason to fear that they cannot easily be confined within the territories of that distracted kingdom. The vices and wickedness which prevail in the world, the licentiousness of men's practice, and their desire, of course, to throw off all restraint, ensure them success among great numbers. Besides, the French Infidels have set themselves against the whole Christian world. Their Doctrines, therefore, must be propagated, for they have no prospect of success but in overturning Governments, and in eradicating a sense of God and Religion out of the minds of men. Hence the impious attempts they have made, and the zeal they have shown to spread the infection of their irreligious principles wherever their influence has extended.

And now, my Countrymen, convinced that the danger is great—that it is immediate—I feel myself constrained by the obligations

of Religion, to come forward and to address you, on this momentous occasion, in the spirit of Christian Love.

Ye who occupy the higher ranks of life, have an important part to act. You are firmly attached to our civil establishment. You have expressed, in strong terms, your abhorrence of French Anarchy and Impiety. But something more is requisite. Religion is the great bond of social union. It is our only security for the virtue of the people. You must, therefore, study to promote its interests. You must reverence its Sacred Institutions. Should you follow an opposite line of conduct, the consequences will be fatal to yourselves and others. Of this, the nation of France furnishes a melancholy proof. Their Noblesse and Philosophers became converts to Infidelity: they contemned all Religion: their principles gradually spread among the lower orders of men. At length the plan of Rousseau, who, in order to overthrow Divine Revelation, proposed to establish a Universal Worship in honour of Human Reason, has been carried into effect. Hence the shocking scenes now exhibited in that country.

If you would dread such a state of Society as the greatest calamity that ever befel a nation, attend to the means which are the best preservative from it. It is alleged that not a few of those among us who are distinguished by birth or fortune, have deserted our Churches, and show too little respect for the Christian Sabbath. Perhaps some have acted in this manner merely through inconsideration. The state of public affairs will admit of this apology no longer. The man who will not now give his countenance to Religion, and Religious Worship, may come to be accounted an enemy to the cause. By your situations in life, your example will necessarily have an influence on those around you. "Let your light then shine before 'men.' 'Neglect no longer the assembling 'of yourselves together,' on the first day of the week, 'as the manner of some has been.'"

You have of late entered into Associations for supporting the Constitution and Government of your Country. I am persuaded that similar Associations to give countenance to the Institutions of Religion, would be one of the best means you could devise for effec-

tuating that important purpose. And surely it would not be unbecoming, nor unworthy of your station, to adopt the resolution of attending the Church on the Lord's day, and to enjoin the same conduct on your Children and Servants. Entertaining the pleasing hope of seeing this advice complied with, I feel a strong presentiment that it will be attended with the noblest effects. It will put out of countenance those in the lower walks of life, who are unhappily become profligate and licentious. What is much more, it will ensure to you that influence among the great body of the people, particularly among the sober and good, which persons of distinction long possessed in this country, and to which superior rank, when adorned by virtue, is well entitled.

But it is not to those in more conspicuous stations of life alone that I address myself. To avert the danger that threatens our best and highest interests, there is a necessity for a firm union, and a steady co-operation, among the Servants of our common Lord, of every rank and denomination.

You are not ignorant, Christians, how much reason we had, formerly, to lament the growth of Infidelity; how much we have laboured to convince and convert men to the Faith. But alas! our work is exceedingly increased. The unprincipled and profane, who hate our councils, rejoice at the diffusion of opinions and doctrines, which at once set them free from the restraints of conscience, and an apprehension of a Judgment to come. In what language shall we address those who disbelieve the Gospel? How shall we awaken to a sense of danger, persons who have arrived to such an awful height of impiety as to say "that there is no God."

Even with respect to many of those whose former profession promised better things, we are not a little apprehensive. Are you not liable, in such trying times, to be imposed upon, and seduced into measures of which you may repent, when, alas! it may be too late? Captivated by the high sounding terms of Liberty and Equality, you may be no ways alarmed about matters of the last importance to your eternal welfare, for this reason, because you see no danger. Attend,

I beseech you, to the progress of National Infidelity among the French. At the beginning of their Revolution, they held out doctrines and principles of which every candid mind must approve. They began with a Reform in their Civil Government, the necessity of which was generally acknowledged: they proceeded for a while, apparently under the guidance of Patriotism and Public Virtue. But how soon, alas! did they overleap the boundary prescribed by Reason and Religion? On a sudden there arose a band of impious spirits. These took advantage of the passions of the people. The cry of Liberty resounded to the skies. But who would have imagined that the Gospel of Jesus was to be sacrificed at its shrine? Who could have believed before hand, that those impious Rites of which we have heard, would be performed in the Temple of God? Yet these things have happened; and many good and virtuous Spirits, who joined their voices in approbation of measures pursued in the first stages of the Revolution, are, some of them, mourning in secret over their own conduct, while others of them have suffered under the instruments of death, for attempting to recover what they had lost.

Take warning from so very recent an example. Among us the cry after a change is already raised. Though the grounds of complaint are small in comparison, pretences for founding the alarm are not wanting. These, if not resisted at the beginning, may soon acquire support, and, in the issue prove dangerous to all that is dear to us as Men and Christians. There may be among us, as well as in other nations, men who have selfish and sinister ends to serve; whose designs are artfully concealed; lovers of discord and disorder. If they have begun already in any measure to show themselves, by speaking lightly of the obligations of Religion, by an affected imitation of the language of the sons of licentiousness, then you have a loud call to take care not to listen to them, but to turn away. ‘O my soul come not into their secret, unto their assembly, mine honour, be thou not united.’

If you should slight these admonitions, who can tell what the consequences may be? To poison your minds and to prepare you for the part they wish you to act, artful men will teach you to cry aloud, against the efforts that are now making to repress the most danger-

ous spirit that ever discovered itself among mankind. That you detest war I am not surprised. It is an unnatural and destructive state. I speak not in its favour. I hope light and knowledge and true religion, as they have already moderated some of its direful consequences, so they will gradually operate to prevent it altogether. But why is the cry now louder than usual? The present war is of no common complexion. Should the enemies of religion and order prevail, all your best interests are brought into immediate danger. Wherever they are able to plant their deadly Poplar, which they call the Tree of Liberty, but which is in truth the emblem of Tyranny and Irreligion, the Cross of Jesus will fall before it.

On former occasions this nation has been visited with the calamities of war. The contest has been, for—forms of government—the succession of princes—imaginary or trifling insults—extension of territory, or establishment of power. Those wars have been submitted to without murmuring, and supported with spirit; and shall we succumb on the present occasion, when we are called to exert ourselves in our own defence, against those

disturbers of the world, whose aim seems to be, to overturn our Establishment both in Church and State; and, if possible, wholly to deprive us of the benefits of the Gospel.

Ye Ministers of Christ, unite your efforts in support of our common Christianity. Separated as you may be from one another by the distinguishing tenets, forms or ceremonies of the Churches or religious Societies to which you belong, cultivate unity of affection, and strive with one heart and one soul to stem the torrent of Impiety and Atheism. Ah! how unprofitable have those contests frequently proved, in which good men even of the same communion have engaged, and in which they have sometimes roused the passions of the multitude? Let these now be laid aside, and let all the talents with which you are entrusted be employed in vindicating the cause of God and the Gospel of his Son. Inculcate upon men, reverence for the divine authority, fidelity to our great Master, and the conscientious discharge of every relative duty; and, by your own example, study 'to provoke them to love and good works.'

Ye Elders of the Church, our fellow-la-

bourers in Works of charity and mercy, who have been raised to your respectable office on account of your distinguished regard for Religion ; you have frequent opportunities of mixing with the lower classes of men ; and many of you have great influence among them. In this season of darkness and of danger, it is more particularly your duty to watch over their best interests, and to guard them against this fatal contagion, which threatens to overspread the Christian world. The time has been, when, upon infinitely slighter grounds, you have judged it necessary to awaken the zeal, and to unite the strength, of the people, in order to testify your steady attachment to what you deemed the interests of Religion. And shall you now fall asleep, as if there were no danger ? Will you wait till the enemy is within your borders ? I intreat you to quit yourselves like men, and show to the world that you are not indifferent as to the prevalence of ' the Faith once delivered to the Saints.'

Christians of every denomination, in this hour of trial, approve yourselves the followers of the Prince of Peace. Firmly persuaded that our Religion is divine, cherish

its benign spirit, and turn from the counsels of those who despise or think lightly of it. Thus shall the designs formed against our prosperity and happiness be defeated, and the high privileges we enjoy transmitted undiminished to future generations.

I conclude in the words of that Gospel which, alas! is now so much despised, but which ‘ shall last as long as the sun and moon
 ‘ shall endure, and against which the gates
 ‘ of hell shall never prevail—The foundation
 ‘ of God standeth sure. Let every one that
 ‘ nameth the name of Christ depart from in-
 ‘ iquity. I exhort that supplications and
 ‘ prayers be made for all men, for Kings and
 ‘ all that are in authority, that we may lead
 ‘ quiet and peaceable lives, in all Godliness
 ‘ and honesty—this is good and acceptable
 ‘ in the sight of God our Saviour. Study to
 ‘ be quiet, and to do your own business.
 ‘ Finally, brethren, farewell: be perfect, be
 ‘ of good comfort, be of one mind, live in
 ‘ peace; and the God of love and peace shall
 ‘ be with you.’

THE END.

POSTSCRIPT.

By some very late accounts, it appears, that the irreligious tenets professed by the Jacobins of France, had made impressions so much to their disadvantage, that the Parisian Club have at length announced to the public, that 'they believe in God.' This restricted Confession of faith, seems intended merely to hoodwink and delude the great body of the people; and is consistent with their disavowal of the principal doctrines both of Natural and Revealed Religion. It contains no acknowledgment of the Moral Perfections and Providence of God—of the Obligations to Religious Worship—of the Accountableness of Man—or of the Immortality of the Soul, in opposition to the monstrous assertion, that 'Death is only eternal sleep:" far less does it intimate any respect for Revelation, and the important Truths of the Christian system. It is in reality nothing more than what Epicurus, Spinoza, and all the *Atheistical* tribe, ancient and modern, have admitted. They occasionally acknowledged a Supreme Being, and even some of his Attributes; but they represented him as far removed from the inspection of human affairs. Sometimes they spoke of the Universe, Nature, or Substance, as the Deity. These forms of expression are similar to those of the French Jacobins, who say, that "Nature and Reason are the Gods of Men." A God without Wisdom, Power, Will, Goodness, and Justice, is in reality no God at all.



